

## Croatian fairy tale

Storyteller: Once upon a time there was a king called Jiřík who lived in an old castle in the forest with his daughter Goldilocks. She knew the animal language, so she often spent her free time walking around the forest. In the forest, she she came across a little turtle which was observing passer bys sadly.

(Goldilocks approaching carefully)

Goldilocks: Hey there, little turtle. Why are you so sad? Did anyone hurt you?

Turtle: I'm not sad, I'm just thinking a lot.

Goldilocks: What are you thinking about???

Turtle: About a conversation with a goldfish.

Goldilocks: Share your thoughts with me, if it's going to make it easier for you.

Turtle: The goldfish told me that all unhappiness would disappear if I solved the secret of the forest. But she didn't tell me the secret. Besides, I'm too slow for this kind of venture.

Goldilocks: (smiling) You can't know unless you try, and I think I can help you out.

Turtle: (coming closer to the girl)

Goldilocks: When I was a little girl, my father told me a story about the secret of the forest, about the stone of patience. The story which will come true one day and bring back the joy that is missing in this forest. I think that day came and that it's time for me to pass on the secret to you.

Turtle: (excited) Tell me, tell me, I really want to know...

Goldilocks: Deep in the forest by an old oak, there is a path that leads to the sea shore. Across the shore there is an ancient island Krk. You can cross the sea over the Krk's bridge. Walking along the south side of the island, you will come across the oldest olive tree. When you get to it, take a turn onto the Roman road and go straight on. On the highest spot of the island, you will notice a cave. In that very cave there is the stone of patience. Your mission is to find it.

Turtle: (with an insecure expression accepts that big responsibility) But it's a long way to get there, how will I manage that being so small and slow???

Goldilocks: Don't you worry about it. You won't go alone. You will get help for your way. You'll have ground and air support. Birds, spiders and ants will help you.

Rabbit: (appears from nowhere) And a rabbit, as well!

Turtle: You agree to go with me?

Rabbit: Well, of course, this is my forest too, you know!

Turtle: I hope we'll make it... What do you think, what are our chances?

Rabbit: I don't want to talk about success nowadays. Have you seen the decrease of the value of Euro and the state of the stock market?

Turtle: Yeah, that's true. And how about the loans in Swiss francs... And the global warming...

Rabbit: And then the wars between countries, crisis and many other troubles...

Turtle: But I don't want to talk about it! There are more important things to us. Like school, teachers, maths, sine and cosine, literature...

Rabbit: Huh, I wish those were our biggest problems right now... From all of that talk, I'm not so sure we're going to make it at all.

Turtle: But it's worth trying. It's about our forest and our home.

Storyteller: The very next day, the turtle and the rabbit with their little helpers hit the road. A lot of walking was ahead of them. They walked through the forest all day long, and in the evening, right next to the old oak, they found a girl playing the flute and was totally into what she was doing. She was so into it, that she noticed them only when they came right in front of her, then she stopped playing.

Turtle: Hey there, girl. What's your name?

Zora: My name is Zora. And what are you doing here in this deadly nightshade?

Turtle: We're travelling in pursuit of a cave of magic stones. Do you by any chance know which way should we take from this crossroad?

Zora: If you follow your heart, you will find the right way and accomplish your aim.

Turtle: And why are you playing the flute here at night? It's not like anyone's listening... even though we like it.

Zora: I'm playing for my beloved Greuceanu. Just to make my time go faster until dawn, because at dawn, he will be back. And I suggest you to stay here until dawn, then we can all go together.

Storyteller: While the exhausted animals were sleeping and recovering their energy, Zora was tirelessly playing the flute when she heard a horse clumping (Tp!, tp!, tp!, tp!) and she noticed her beloved Greuceanu was coming towards her. When the sun set, they continued their journey.

When they were passing the Plitvice lakes, a giant ogre came out of nowhere and stood right in front of them. The ogre smelled like stale cheese and sewer, he was wearing a torn vest of a brand Like, some old ripped pants and torn shoes.

Ogre: Listen guys, I need lunch. Either you agree who is going to be my lunch or I will cook all of you together, and give the leftovers to my pets.

Rabbit: Don't do it, bro'. Look at me, I'm literally skin and bones. You wouldn't fill your stomach eating me.

Turtle: Me neither, I guess you're not going to eat my shell in which I keep stuff like cigarettes, lighter, iPhone, chewing gums...

Ogre: I don't wanna hear it... I'll cook you in sauerkraut after I have the crocodile's tail for starter.

Storyteller: After saying those words, the ogre turned upon two little helpless animals, but witty turtle hid under its own shell and hid the rabbit as well. When the ogre realized they had outwitted him, he turned to Greuceanu who defended them all. Ogre realized that he wouldn't find his desired meal here and continued further through the forest. Greuceanu, Zora and the animals continued their way. Soon, they reached the shore coming to the Krk's bridge.

Greuceanu: Oh boy, this toll is so expensive! It's better we found another way. What do you think about that boat over there? (pointing his finger to the right side of the coast) Everyone, follow me.

Storyteller: Down by the bridge, on the pebble beach Selce, the old fisherman Palunko was sitting and polishing his boat. They decided to ask the fisherman for help, to transport them on the other side of the coast. When they came to the fisherman, they noticed he was preparing a new nylon for his fishing rod.

Greuceanu: Hey dude, do you have some time?

Palunko: Well, I'm not quite sure... My buddies are coming for a game of Belot.

Greuceanu: What are you talkin' about? The destiny of the animals from one forest is on the line, and you would play belot? Well, I don't think so!

Palunko: Where do you want to go?

Greuceanu: Just to the other side of the coast.

Palunko: Huh, then we have a problem. My route doesn't go your way. I only travel with my boat to the southern side of the Adriatic: Zadar, Šibenik, Split, Dubrovnik...

Greuceanu and others (all together): Please, it's really important.

Palunko: Oh, okay then, if it's about that... How much are you willing to pay?

Rabbit: How about ten jars of corn? It was for my snack, and since you're a fisherman, you could use it as a bait.

Palunko: You see, I like that idea.

Greuceanu: There you go, my friend, we have a deal!

Storyteller: So the gang kept going their way. Palunko directed them to the olive, and when they passed it, they got on the Roman road toward the cave. On their way there, a lot of passer bys were surprised by their intention to visit the cave. They were wondering why animals would even go there. There were some scary stories about the cave.

At the entrance to the cave, the turtle and the rabbit, Greuceanu and Zora could hear their own footsteps and heartbeats echoing. That sound suddenly became silent and a voice of furious ogres thundered.

Ogre 1: Where do you think you are going? This is our property and my home. No one comes in and no one comes out. At least not alive (thunderous laughter)

Ogre 2: You heard my brother. Leave our cave immediately!

Greuceanu: Ooh no, you scared me to death! I am shaking!! We're not leaving out of here until we get the stone. The stone of patience.

(At the Greuceanu's comment, ogres start wondering who this fellow is, so brave to stand up and confront them to get the stone.)

Ogre 1: Did that guy who calls himself king Jiřík send you here? If so, tell him I will give the stone only to a being that can defeat me, and still is smaller than me.

Storyteller: While Greuceanu and the ogres were arguing, the slow and unnoticeable turtle passed by the ogres, took the stone and got out of the cave. After a few minutes Greuceanu's cell phone rang. Riiiiing!!!

Turtle: Hey man, I'm here by the olive tree and I've got the stone here with me. Run away while you're still alive. Okay now, I need to hang up. I need to top-up my cell phone.

(Greuceanu, surprised by the news which he just got, puts his cell phone away and smiles to the ogres.)

Greuceanu: Oh, actually, why do I need that stone of yours? Here, I just got the call, I won the jackpot!

Storyteller: Greuceanu headed out, giving Zora and the rabbit a sign, though they couldn't understand where that change of mind came from or what was going on. When they came to the old olive tree and saw the turtle, everything was perfectly clear. They knew it was time to return home to their forest. When they got to the coast, Zora took out her flute and with its melody she called the fisherman Palunko to return them to the other side of the shore. Palunko arrived soon and transported them by his boat.

Zora: Thank you, my friend. You did a great deed for these animals. You helped them to save their home.

Palunko: Anytime. Take care and have a pleasant journey.

Storyteller: When they came to the old oak tree, the turtle and the rabbit continued their way to the castle. Goldilocks her father Jiřík met them at the gate expecting good news.

Goldilocks: Welcome back, our dear travelers! I hope you have some good news. Have you brought the stone to us?

Storyteller: The turtle replied with a smile, crawled into its shell and after a few seconds, it took out the stone of patience!... The turtle then handed it to Goldilocks, in whose hands it shone impeccably... The forest woke up at that moment, with leaves, blossoms, smells...And the birds sang their most beautiful aria... The little turtle, all beaming and happy, was watching the forest.

Goldilocks: I remember... Zora said: If you follow your heart, you will accomplish your aim, you will be happy.